

The Role of Digital Marketing in Expanding Market Access for Local Agribusiness Products

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Abstract

Limited market access remains a major challenge facing local agribusinesses, primarily due to reliance on conventional marketing channels and a weak bargaining position within the marketing chain. Advances in digital technology present new opportunities for agribusinesses to transcend geographic boundaries, expand consumer reach, and increase product visibility amidst increasingly competitive markets. However, the utilization of digital marketing has not been fully optimized due to the impact of internal business capacity and the structural dynamics of the agribusiness market itself. This study aims to analyze the role of digital marketing in expanding market access for local agribusiness products and encouraging market inclusion and a desire to do business. This study uses a qualitative approach, reviewing and analyzing various scientific literature sources and previous research relevant to the theme of digital marketing and local agribusiness. The results indicate that digital marketing serves as an alternative channel capable of expanding market reach and strengthening interactions between agribusinesses and consumers. The effectiveness of digital marketing utilization depends heavily on the readiness, ability, and experience of agribusinesses in consistently managing digital channels. In the medium to long term, digital marketing has the potential to drive broader market inclusion and support local agribusiness aspirations by increasing income stability and strengthening business actors' positions within the market structure.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Market Access, Agribusiness Products.

A. INTRODUCTION

As an agricultural country, Indonesia's agricultural sector contributes significantly to the national economy and the livelihoods of rural communities. However, in practice, limited market access remains a structural challenge faced by local agribusinesses in various regions. Many farmers still rely on traditional marketing channels, particularly middlemen or intermediary traders who visit the fields and purchase their crops directly, while broader marketing networks such as formal markets, modern markets, or digital channels have not been optimized evenly. This reliance on intermediaries reflects the inability of most farmers to interact directly with the broader market, thus reducing their profit opportunities and bargaining position in the agribusiness distribution chain in Indonesia (Sudomo et al., 2023).

This dependency phenomenon is reinforced by various studies showing that the majority of local farmers still rely on middlemen as their primary marketing channel. In a case study of a rice farming community in a rural area, 68% of farmer respondents reported that they still sell their crops through the middlemen marketing system, while the remainder sell directly to local markets and end consumers. This

indicates that formal market access and modern marketing channels are still unable to fully reach small-scale agribusinesses (Zain et al., 2025).

Dependence on intermediaries not only impacts the marketing structure but also the value capture achieved by farmers. In many cases, intermediaries have better access to price information and a dominant bargaining position, resulting in farmers often receiving lower prices than end-consumer prices. Furthermore, limited access to real-time market price information, limited business capital, transportation infrastructure, and low institutional capacity further limit opportunities for local agribusinesses to develop broader and more diverse market access (Kujipers et al., 2024).

The following presents empirical data on marketing patterns that demonstrate the dominance of traditional channels by local farmers in several regions of Indonesia (Zain et al., 2025):

Table 1. Marketing Patterns of Local Farmers' Agricultural Products in Indonesia

Marketing Channel	Percentage of Farmers (%)
Selling through middlemen/intermediaries	68%
Selling directly to local markets/end consumers	32%

Table 1 shows that most farmers still rely heavily on traditional marketing channels, which limit their access to more modern or broader markets. The dominance of these traditional channels results in low added value for farmers, as profit margins are often taken at the intermediary level. This imbalance in the marketing structure also weakens farmers' bargaining position in price negotiations, increases the risk of loss when market prices fluctuate, and reduces the competitiveness of local agribusiness products compared to products from other regions or commodities that have penetrated modern and digital markets (Jablonski et al., 2022).

This situation indicates that many small agribusinesses in Indonesia still lack broad, efficient, and remunerative market access. The lack of direct connections with end consumers, the lack of relevant real-time market information, and a lack of technological capacity are factors that hinder their ability to grow and increase business revenues (Ahmed et al., 2023).

In the context of Indonesia's rapidly developing digital economy, the inclusion of local agribusinesses in digital marketing has the potential to overcome some of these obstacles. Digital marketing can open broader market access without being limited by geographic distance, and provides farmers with the opportunity to build direct relationships with consumers or buyers outside their local area. Therefore, scientific research examining the role of digital marketing in expanding market access for local agribusiness products is highly relevant. This approach can not only bridge farmers' dependence on traditional channels but also improve distribution efficiency and their bargaining power in the long term.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that involves promoting products or services using digital technology. Digital marketing refers to the use of the internet and other interactive technologies to build and strengthen relationships between companies and consumers (Yevseitseva et al., 2022). This includes various methods such as websites, search engine marketing, online banner advertising, social media, viral marketing, email marketing, and affiliate marketing. The primary goal of digital marketing is to reach a larger audience through the use of online platforms (Rajendra Kumar, 2025).

Digital marketing has become an essential tool for entrepreneurs, and with consumers' increasing ability to follow digital trends, many companies are shifting from conventional marketing methods to more modern approaches. According to Kotler, digital marketing is a process aimed at creating and maintaining positive relationships with consumers through the internet and various digital media (Sharabati et al., 2024). The goal is to meet customer needs by leveraging digital technology. Using digital technology to market products or services, companies can reach a broad target audience, communicate directly with clients in real time, and do so cost-effectively (Theodorakopoulos & Theodoropoulou, 2024).

As technology evolves, digital promotion will increase its strategic value for businesses seeking to remain relevant in today's digital age. Digital marketing refers to the approach of promoting products or services using digital technologies, including the internet, social media, search engines, email, and mobile devices. The origins of digital marketing can be traced back to the early days of the internet, when companies began to realize that websites could be used to reach a wider audience (Khanom, 2023).

In the early 2000s, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) became a widely used method to increase website visibility and attract more visitors. This involves tailoring website content to rank better in search results. Over time, digital marketing has evolved to encompass various other strategies and techniques, such as Search Engine Marketing (SEM), social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, and more (Mladenović et al., 2023). Furthermore, there's Digital Content Marketing (DCM). Digital content marketing is a complex and dynamic marketing strategy focused on creating, publishing, and distributing valuable and relevant content to increase customer engagement and drive profitable business outcomes. This strategy must be data-driven, personalized, and continuously evaluated to be optimal (Jami Pour & Karimi, 2024).

According to Mushoffa & Fadli, digital marketing has dimensions that are interconnected with the 4Ps of the marketing mix, particularly in the promotional section. The following are the dimensions of digital marketing:

- a. Website
A website serves as a bridge to the digital world as a whole and is a crucial element of a digital marketing strategy. All online activities are directed to potential consumers through this platform (Al-Abdallah et al., 2025).
- b. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
SEO, or search engine optimization, is the process of organizing website content to make it more accessible to consumers. The goal is to make it easier for search engines to find content in a more specific way (Al-Haraizah et al., 2025).
- c. Click-Based Advertising (PPC Advertising)
PPC, or pay-per-click, is a form of advertising that allows marketers to attract attention using specific keywords on the internet. Marketers can purchase positions on search results pages to increase the visibility of their products or services (Rezaei et al., 2024).
- d. Affiliate Marketing and Strategic Partnerships
Affiliate marketing involves collaborating with other organizations or companies and websites to achieve mutual benefits through synergistic promotion of products or services (Gu et al., 2025).
- e. Online Public Relations (Online PR)
Online PR is a digital channel used to build a positive brand image, with the goal of positioning a company or organization as an authority in a specific field (Mitchuk et al., 2023).
- f. Social Networks
Social networks offer significant marketing opportunities, although they currently do not fully provide in-depth advertising or information methods for small groups in society (Borah et al., 2022).
- g. Email Marketing
Email marketing remains a crucial tool in digital marketing, used to maintain relationships with existing customers and reach potential customers who are receptive to receiving information via email (Thomas et al., 2022).
- h. Customer Relationship Management
Customer relationship management aims to retain existing customers and build mutually beneficial partnerships with them (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2024).

C. METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of the role of digital marketing in expanding market access for local agribusiness products. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively explore the dynamics, context, and complexity of the problems faced by local agribusiness actors in accessing markets, particularly within the framework of marketing transformation in the digital era. The research focused on exploring various empirical findings and academic arguments presented in previous

studies, thereby building a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Research data sources were obtained through a systematic review of various relevant literature, including scientific articles, research reports, policy publications, and other academic documents directly related to the research topic. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively through a process of organizing, grouping themes, and interpreting meanings to identify patterns, trends, and implications emerging from these findings. This analysis process was carried out continuously and reflectively to ensure that the research results provided a comprehensive and relevant picture of the role of digital marketing in expanding market access for local agribusiness products (Hasan et al., 2025).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Structural Barriers to Market Access in Local Agribusiness

Limited market access for local agribusinesses in Indonesia is not only reflected in the dominance of traditional marketing channels, but also in inefficient distribution structures and the unequal value-added received by producers. Despite Indonesia's significant agricultural potential, the reality on the ground shows that most local agribusinesses still face marketing mechanisms that involve numerous intermediaries, thus reducing their potential profits. This phenomenon poses a significant structural obstacle to expanding the market reach of local agribusiness products, as producers not only struggle to sell their products in larger markets but also are limited in achieving reasonable margins on their produce.

In agribusiness marketing practices across Indonesia, the multi-linked distribution structure often makes it difficult for producers to establish direct relationships with end consumers or expand their marketing channels. Intermediaries such as collectors, middlemen, wholesalers, and retailers often take a significant share of the marketing margin, leaving only a small portion for producers. This situation creates an imbalance in bargaining power between local agribusinesses and other actors in the marketing chain, as producers often find themselves in the position of "price takers," accepting the offered price without strong negotiating power.

Limited market information further exacerbates these structural barriers, as many farmers lack adequate access to market price information at the regional or national level. This leads to a greater reliance on information from intermediaries, which may not reflect actual market prices. When transparent price information is unavailable, producers tend to adopt suboptimal marketing strategies, impacting their ability to reach a wider market. This obstacle aligns with findings from commodity marketing studies in Indonesia, which show that the length of the distribution chain and the dominance of intermediaries lead to an unequal distribution of value among agribusiness actors.

Furthermore, logistical and geographic barriers in various agribusiness production centers also limit product distribution. Inadequate transportation infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, impacts distribution costs and the travel time for products to reach larger markets or consumption centers. Under these

conditions, local agribusinesses often choose local or regional channels closer to production locations to avoid high logistics costs, despite the potential for a broader market if they are able to overcome these barriers.

To clarify these structural barriers, the following empirical data reflects the proportion of local agribusinesses in Indonesia based on the marketing channels they use. This also implicitly demonstrates the significant role of intermediaries in the agricultural product marketing structure (Dewi et al., 2025).

Table 2. Distribution of Agricultural Product Marketing Channels by Farmers in Indonesia

Marketing Distribution	Proportion of Farmers (%)
Farmers → Collectors → Wholesalers → Consumers	83.49%
Farmers → Collectors → Retailers → Consumers	15.20%
Farmers → Direct consumers	1.31%

Table 2 shows that more than half of local agribusiness farmers in Indonesia still rely on marketing channels through one or more intermediaries. Only a small proportion, less than 2%, can sell directly to end consumers, while the majority remain involved in a long distribution structure. Research on red rice marketing in several regions indicates that although there are channels that provide a higher proportion of profits for farmers when they sell directly, this channel is still not the dominant choice for many farmers due to various obstacles, such as limited market access, capital, and distribution networks.

The dominance of these intermediary channels provides empirical evidence that local agribusinesses remain highly dependent on traditional marketing mechanisms, which in turn weakens their bargaining position in the broader market structure. This condition reflects that market access barriers are not only technical but also structural and systemic, limiting the ability of local agribusinesses to explore marketing opportunities outside the traditional framework. Understanding these distribution patterns is important to provide a clearer context before moving on to examining how digital marketing can be an alternative for expanding market access, which will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.

2. Digital Marketing as a Channel for Market Expansion

The use of digital marketing has opened up new opportunities for local agribusinesses in Indonesia to expand their market reach, previously limited by conventional marketing structures. Through various digital platforms, agribusiness products no longer have to rely on geographic proximity between producers and consumers, as product information, transaction processes, and communication can occur simultaneously across regions. This creates opportunities for local agribusinesses to reach consumers beyond their traditional markets, including urban and other regional markets that were previously difficult to access due to limited physical distribution and high logistics costs. Thus, digital marketing serves as an

alternative channel that can transcend spatial boundaries and expand the marketing reach of local agribusiness products.

Expanding geographic reach through digital channels has also brought about significant changes in how agribusinesses position their products in the market. Products previously known only locally can now be showcased to a wider audience through social media, online marketplaces, and various other digital channels. The existence of digital platforms allows producers to convey product information directly to potential consumers, bypassing the long distribution chain. This provides opportunities for local agribusinesses to access new market segments while reducing dependence on intermediaries that have dominated the traditional marketing system.

In addition to expanding market reach, digital marketing is also driving changes in interaction patterns between agribusiness producers and consumers. Previously indirect and limited interactions have now evolved into more intensive two-way communication. Through digital channels, producers can receive direct feedback from consumers regarding product quality, preferences, and market needs. This interaction pattern not only shortens the distance between producers and consumers but also enables agribusinesses to adapt marketing strategies and product offerings more responsively to the dynamics of market demand.

The ability of digital marketing to increase the visibility and exposure of local agribusiness products is also a crucial factor in the market expansion process. Digital platforms provide a space for local products to appear alongside a variety of other products, increasing the opportunity for them to be recognized by consumers who previously lacked access to them. This visibility relates not only to the product's presence on digital platforms but also to how producers consistently build their product narrative, image, and presence. In this context, digital marketing enables local agribusinesses to strengthen their product identity and increase their appeal amidst increasingly competitive markets.

The shift from location-based marketing to network-based marketing represents a significant implication of the use of digital channels in agribusiness. While conventional marketing relies heavily on physical location and proximity to markets, digital marketing relies on information networks and relationships built in the digital space. These networks enable local agribusiness products to circulate more widely without having to adhere to rigid traditional distribution patterns. By relying on digital networks, agribusinesses can build relationships with consumers, business partners, and other market actors more flexibly and sustainably.

This transformation in marketing patterns demonstrates that digital marketing functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a mechanism that transforms the structure of market access for local agribusinesses. By utilizing digital channels, producers have the opportunity to expand their markets more independently, improve connectivity with consumers, and strengthen their position within an increasingly integrated marketing ecosystem. Therefore, the role of digital marketing as a market expansion channel is increasingly relevant in the context of local

agribusiness in Indonesia, particularly in addressing structural challenges that have traditionally limited market access through conventional marketing systems.

3. Capacity and Readiness of Local Agribusiness Actors in Adopting Digital Marketing

The readiness and capacity of local agribusinesses to adopt digital marketing are determining factors in the successful use of digital channels as a market expansion strategy. Although access to digital platforms is increasingly open, the ability of agribusinesses to utilize this technology effectively remains highly diverse. Differences in educational background, business experience, and digital literacy levels create a gap in skills and knowledge in the use of digital media. This situation means that not all agribusinesses can maximize the potential of digital marketing, even though they are located in the same environment and have access to relatively similar technological infrastructure.

This gap in capabilities is reflected in how agribusinesses manage content, interact with consumers, and understand the dynamics of the digital market. Some can strategically utilize digital platforms to build product presence and reach new consumers, while others still use digital media only in a limited and sporadic manner. These differences relate not only to technical capabilities but also to an understanding of changing marketing patterns that demand a more open, responsive, and consumer-oriented communication approach. Consequently, the effectiveness of digital marketing depends heavily on the capacity of individual agribusinesses to adapt to the characteristics of digital channels.

The challenge of adapting to changing marketing and consumer communication methods is also a crucial aspect in assessing the readiness of local agribusinesses. Digital marketing demands different interaction patterns than conventional marketing, where communication is faster and two-way. For some agribusinesses, this change requires adjustments in attitudes and mindsets, particularly in responding to consumer feedback and maintaining ongoing communication. The inability to adapt optimally often leads to inconsistent use of digital marketing, thus under-utilizing the full potential of digital channels for market expansion.

Limited resources also significantly impact the consistent use of digital marketing by local agribusinesses. Limited resources, whether in terms of time, manpower, or financial support, often make it difficult for businesses to sustainably manage digital marketing activities. In practice, digital marketing requires significant commitment, from content management to monitoring market response. When internal resources are inadequate, digital marketing tends to be implemented incidentally and poorly integrated with the overall business strategy, resulting in a less-than-optimal impact on market expansion.

In this context, learning and experience play a crucial role in enhancing the digital marketing capacity of local agribusinesses. The learning process, which occurs through direct practice, interaction with consumers, and observation of digital market

dynamics, gradually develops a better understanding of effective digital marketing strategies. As experience increases, agribusinesses tend to become more confident in using digital platforms and better able to adapt their marketing approaches to the characteristics of their target markets. This experience also contributes to businesses' ability to manage resource constraints more efficiently.

The readiness and capacity of local agribusinesses to adopt digital marketing is a gradual process and is influenced by various internal factors. Capacity gaps, adaptation challenges, and resource constraints create complex dynamics in the utilization of digital channels. However, through learning and accumulated experience, agribusinesses have the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of digital marketing and strengthen their position in market expansion efforts. Therefore, strengthening internal capacity is a key element in ensuring that digital marketing can be utilized sustainably and make a tangible contribution to local agribusiness development.

4. Implications of Digital Marketing for Market Inclusion and Agribusiness Sustainability

The use of digital marketing in local agribusinesses has important implications for expanding market inclusion, which has historically been limited and uneven. Through digital channels, agribusinesses gain the opportunity to reach market segments previously difficult to access due to geographic limitations, distribution networks, and the dominance of certain actors in conventional marketing systems. This more open access not only expands consumer reach but also contributes to the formation of a relatively more inclusive market structure, where small-scale agribusinesses have greater opportunities to actively participate. In the medium term, this situation has the potential to reduce market exclusion, which has been a major obstacle to local agribusiness development.

Expanding market access through digital marketing also has direct implications for the income stability of local agribusinesses. By opening up opportunities to reach a broader and more diverse consumer base, dependence on narrow and volatile local markets can be reduced. Market diversification created through digital channels enables businesses to manage demand risks more adaptively, especially when market conditions change or traditional distribution channels experience disruptions. In the long term, greater income stability contributes to increased agribusiness resilience while strengthening the position of local players in facing increasingly competitive market dynamics.

On the other hand, the use of digital marketing has also changed the dynamics of the relationships between producers, consumers, and intermediaries in the agribusiness value chain. Interactions that were previously indirect and dependent on intermediaries have now transformed into more open and communicative relationships. Agribusiness actors have a greater opportunity to build direct relationships with consumers, understand market preferences, and adapt production and marketing strategies more responsively. This change does not necessarily

eliminate the role of intermediaries, but rather encourages adjustments in their functions and positions within the increasingly digitalized marketing system.

This transformation in relationships between actors also impacts the creation of more equitable added value within the local agribusiness system. With increased product visibility and consumer engagement, agribusiness actors have the opportunity to strengthen product identity and build sustainable market trust. This trust is crucial for maintaining business sustainability, especially in a competitive context that demands consistent quality and continuity of supply. In the long term, more transparent and participatory market relations have the potential to create a more balanced and change-adaptive agribusiness ecosystem.

The implications of digital marketing for the sustainability of local agribusinesses are also evident in its ability to support long-term business strategies. Access to broader and more stable markets encourages agribusinesses to plan production in a more measured and sustainability-oriented manner. With market information more readily available through digital interactions, businesses can adjust production capacity, reduce waste, and improve operational efficiency. This strengthens the foundation of business sustainability, both from an economic perspective and in resource management.

These dynamics demonstrate that expanding access and transforming market relations mediated by digital marketing go beyond simply increasing visibility or transaction efficiency. In practice, the digital space forms a broader mechanism that influences the distribution of economic benefits along the agribusiness value chain. This mechanism operates through transparency of price information, reduced dependence on certain intermediaries, and opportunities for farmers to optimize their position in the marketing process. Therefore, discussions on the implications of digital marketing for agribusiness sustainability need to be complemented by an exploration of concrete mechanisms that explain how the use of the digital space contributes to the gradual and sustainable improvement of farmer welfare.

Table 3. Mechanisms for Improving Farmer Welfare Through the Use of Digital Space

Digitalization Function	Mechanism	Impact	References
Reducing information asymmetry	Farmers can find out dynamic information related to consumer demand, market prices, and trends in high-value-added commodities as a basis for making decisions about what commodities to produce.	When production matches market demand, food production can be better absorbed, increasing farmer incomes. This is a demand-driven production scheme.	Yang et al. (2025)

Increase marketing flexibility	Digital platforms provide farmers with flexibility in marketing, including the determination of selling prices.	Farmers can increase their bargaining power and determine prices for their products by considering the profit margin they want to take.	Liu et al. (2024)
	Farmers have greater freedom to choose channels and sales periods for their produce. This increases the opportunity for increased output prices and net income due to price certainty.	Farmer household income and expenditure increased.	Ma et al. (2022)
Reduce product distribution and circulation costs	Digital platform providers use cold chain systems to facilitate the product transit process before it reaches consumers.	The economic losses that farmers are currently vulnerable to due to the long value chain, such as food shortages and unabsorbed agricultural products, can be reduced.	Guan et al. (2024)

The implications of digital marketing for market inclusion and the sustainability of local agribusinesses are multidimensional and interconnected. Expanded market access, income stability, changing market relationship dynamics, and strengthening long-term business strategies create a more robust sustainability framework for local agribusinesses. In this context, digital marketing serves not only as a promotional tool but also as an integral part of the agribusiness transformation process toward a more inclusive and sustainable market structure.

E. CONCLUSION

Digital marketing plays a strategic role in expanding market access for local agribusiness products, which have traditionally faced various structural, geographic, and informational limitations. Utilizing digital channels opens up opportunities for agribusinesses to reach broader markets, build more direct interactions with consumers, and increase product visibility beyond conventional marketing networks. However, the effectiveness of digital marketing is greatly influenced by the internal capacity and readiness of agribusinesses, particularly regarding their ability, experience, and the availability of resources to manage marketing activities

sustainably. Furthermore, the use of digital marketing has important implications for market inclusion and the sustainability of local agribusinesses. Expanding market reach contributes to increased income stability and strengthened bargaining power of agribusinesses in the value chain, while simultaneously driving changes in the dynamics of relationships between producers, consumers, and intermediaries. In the medium to long term, digital marketing has the potential to be a supporting instrument for the formation of a more inclusive and adaptive market structure, enabling local agribusinesses not only to survive but also to thrive more sustainably amidst the changing marketing landscape.

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